

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 4238

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV PINT GR

SUBJ: POSSIBLE SCENARIO FOR ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

REF ATHENS 4085

1. AS WE INDICATED IN REFTEL, NOBODY KNOWS AS OF NOW WHETHER CARAMANLIS WILL OPT TO REMAIN AS PRIME MINISTER OR CHOOSE TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT. HOWEVER, WE SAID THE CHANCES SEEMED BETTER THAN EVEN TO US HE WILL OPT TO REMAIN AS PRIME MINISTER. IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR, UNDERSECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER FOR PRESS AND INFORMATION LAMBRIAS, ONE OF THE PM'S CLOSEST ASSOCIATES WHO IS IN FREQUENT CONTACT WITH HIM EVERY DAY, IN EFFECT CONFIRMED THIS VIEW (ALTHOUGH HE ALSO CAUTIONED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD PROBABLY STILL NOT MADE UP HIS MIND).

2. ACCORDING TO LAMBRIAS THE MOST LIKELY SCENARIO (WITH A 70 PERCENT PROBABILITY) FOLLOWING ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION WOULD BE FOR THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT TO CONTINUE--CARAMANLIS WOULD STAY AS PRIME MINISTER AND STASSINOPOULOS WOULD BE REELECTED PRESIDENT. LAMBRIAS THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THERE WAS A 30 PERCENT POSSIBILITY CARAMANLIS WOULD WANT A DIFFERENT PRESIDENT (AND OTHER REPORTS SUGGESTED EARLIER HE WAS NOT COMPLETELY HAPPY WITH STASSINOPOULOS). IN SUCH A CASE
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THE MOST LIKELY CANDIDATE WAS PARLIAMENT PRESIDENT

PAPACONSTANTINOU (60 PERCENT) WITH DEPUTY CONSTANTINE TSATSOS
ANOTHER LIKELY CANDIDATE (30 PERCENT). IN VIEW OF THE WAY
CARAMANLIS OPERATES, HOWEVER, LAMBRIAS SAID HE COULD NOT
EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY (10 PERCENT) OF SOME OTHER CANDIDATE
(BUT HE SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDED MINISTER OF INTERIOR
STEPHANOPOULOS, WHO HAS BEEN MENTIONED BY SOME AS A POSSIBILITY).

3. COMMENT: THE PROBABILITY LAMBRIAS ASCRIBES TO CARAMANLIS
KEEPING STASSINOPOULOS ON AS PRESIDENT SEEMS SOMEWHAT HIGH
TO US. WE BELIEVE IT JUST AS LIKELY THAT HE WILL CHOOSE
PAPACONSTANTINOU OR TSATSOS, OR SOMEBODY ELSE CLOSE TO HIM,
FOR THAT POSITION. CARAMANLIS, AS WE KNOW, PLAYS HIS CARDS
VERY CLOSE TO HIS CHEST AND NOBODY CAN BE SURE WHAT HE WILL
DO UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE. ACCORDING TO PRESENT SPECULATION,
WITH THE NEW CONSTITUTION COMING INTO FORCE ON JUNE 11,
THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT COULD TAKE PLACE BY THE END OF
THE MONTH. (UNDER THE CONSTITUTION HE MUST BE ELECTED BY
AUGUST 10.) KUBISCH

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